

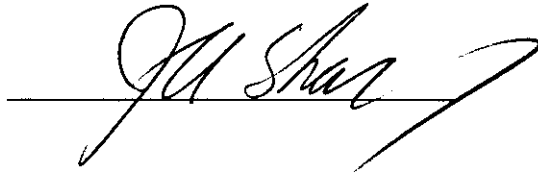
Super Man II: A Parody

An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)

By

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Abstract

In my studies of telecommunications and creative writing over the past four years, I have gained skills in both crafting stories and in bringing those stories to life in the form of video productions. I have also worked for a comedic television show for those four years, and I have enjoyed the challenge of making people laugh. My goal is to incorporate all of these skills and interests into a creative thesis project that will help prepare me for the work I will be doing in the film industry. Using my fascination with the *Superman* stories as a springboard for ideas, I have written a script for a short movie that parodies the film *Superman II*. I have undertaken the task of translating this script from the page to the screen. I am the producer, director, camera operator, editor, and an actor for this mini-movie that has been aired on the TV show BSU Late Night.

Acknowledgments

- I want to give a huge amount of thanks to my advisor Jim Shasky for helping me throughout this project. I truly appreciated our Thursday meetings and the insight they offered into directing and filming. I also want to thank him for being willing to grade my project rather last minute, seeing as how he was not my original advisor.
- I also want to thank everyone who helped me film this movie, especially Shane Heimann. Shane was my right-hand man throughout the production, helping me run camera, audio, and also acting in the movie. He also helped keep me sane when nobody's schedules seemed to work together, offered helpful information during editing and kept me company during late-nights in the media lab.
- My cast was wonderful. Thank you to Jon Daly and Kevin McCaffrey; you really are my super men. Jaimie Hughes, Nick Pride, Dusty Sheckles, Pete Ellingsworth, Mike Lyon, Rosey Butler, Andy Bond, and Matt Heimann are all a joy to work with and very talented. And a very special thanks goes to Steven Weir for sacrificing his flip flops and being willing to go for a swim in the duck pond. Few men are so brave.
- Finally, I want to thank the writers of *Superman II*, Jerry Siegel, Joe Shuster, Mario Puzo, David Newman, Leslie Newman, and Tom Mankiewicz for creating a story that inspired me, and I want to thank director Richard Lester for putting the story into pictures.

Artist Statement

The purpose of an Honors Thesis is to represent a student's best work and achievements in the academic areas he or she has been studying throughout college. As a telecommunications major and a creative writing minor, I wanted to do a creative project that would require me to use all the skills I have learned from these areas of study over the last four years. During those four years, I have also worked for a campus television show called BSU Late Night. I spent my junior year as a producer and my senior year as an Executive Producer. This weekly show specializes in doing sketch comedy within a late-night talk show format. Since this TV show has been an extremely important element in my college education, I also felt my thesis should somehow relate to BSU Late Night. Therefore, I decided to write a comedic, short movie script which I would then produce and edit myself into a final product that would air on the show.

Back at the end of my junior year, I had thought that I wanted to write a script, but I did not think it would be one that I would produce into a video. I had originally intended to write a script for an episode of the TV series, *Smallville*. After having more time to think about what I wanted to do, I realized that just writing that script would fail to involve all the skills I have gained through studying my major in TV and movie production. Also, every year, a senior producer for BSU Late Night is asked to do a short movie for the final, hour-long episode of the season. I was asked to do it this year, and I thought it would be a great opportunity to incorporate everything I have been working on during college. I also knew that it would be extremely difficult to try to write both the *Smallville* script and another script that I would have to also produce into a movie. However, I still wanted to keep the *Superman* theme for my project since I have an interest in the stories of that fictional universe. With that in mind, I decided to write a movie that parodied my favorite movie of the series, *Superman II*.

The purpose of my short film is to be comedic. I believe making people laugh is one of the most important and difficult jobs a person can have. It is important because laughter helps keep people happy and sane in this high-stress and dangerous world. Being funny is an incredibly difficult job because no two people have the exact same sense of humor, and there is no tried and true formula for writing a joke. The challenge of being funny is one that I have taken on during my time working for BSU Late Night, and it has never been easy for me. However, it has taught me to think in new and creative ways, and it has been a rewarding experience.

The process I went through in order to write the parody involved watching the movie, *Superman II*, four times while taking notes. I logged scenes and important plot points while trying to think of how to make the movie work in Muncie, Indiana with a virtually non-existent budget and a serious lack of capabilities to do special effects. I was able to write the movie in such a way that I was able to avoid having to use too many special effects, and I reworked scenes so that it made sense for them to happen in Muncie.

Once the script was written, it was time to start production. As the producer, I had to cast all of my actors for the movie and arrange a schedule for filming that worked for all of my actors. It is quite a challenge to find times when a large group of people can get together to shoot even one scene. All of my actors are people involved with BSU Late Night, and they are all very busy

college students. It was crucial that I stayed organized and aware of everyone's schedules. Another aspect of being the producer involved finding locations to film certain scenes. For one scene where the three evil aliens mistreat some local people, we drove to a location about twenty minutes outside Muncie to a little town called Camack.

During production, I was the director, which means I decided on camera shots and angles. Basically, directing involves having a vision of how to put the words on the paper into moving pictures for the screen. For a majority of the movie, I also worked the camera. I played a character in the movie as well, and during my scenes in front of the camera, my great assistant, Shane, ran the camera. I wanted to act in the movie on top of everything else because acting is another one of my passions. I am very glad I could work that into my thesis as well.

Using all of the technical equipment, the Sony PD 150 digital camera, and the shotgun microphones, are all things I learned through my telecommunications classes. Once the movie was completely filmed, yet another technical, but also creative feat was ahead of me. I then had to edit the movie into its final form. I used AVID editing software for this part of the project. This movie was the most complex thing I have ever edited because it required so much music and so many sound effects and visual effects. I had to learn new tricks with the effects available in the program in order to make lasers shoot from the aliens' eyes and to make mirrors with aliens trapped inside float through space. One final, technical job that I faced was learning how to put my movie on DVD. I had never authored a DVD before this project, but I took the time to learn the program, and was able to put my movie on something of higher quality than VHS tape.

Another formidable task that faced me with the movie was that it had to fit within a certain time frame for our television show. I had to learn how to cut a story down to its most essential parts, which can be much harder than it might sound. Ultimately, the movie ended up being about fourteen minutes, which worked out fine. My thesis was then aired before a live studio audience at the taping of our final show of the season. It has also been played on channel 57 in the dorms and on Comcast channel 42 throughout Delaware County. I have been able to receive instant feedback from my college peers, for whom the movie was most specifically intended. I was honored to get a lot of positive responses from members of our audience.

Writing, producing, directing, operating camera for, acting in, and editing this movie was the biggest and most challenging project I have done at Ball State. I was able to incorporate my love for and skills in the fields of creative writing and telecommunications into this movie. I was also able to try my hand at a comedic short film as opposed to the short skits I usually do for the show. I am grateful I had the chance to do this movie because it gave me a taste of what it's like to work on longer, more involved video projects. The experience gained working on this film will help me greatly as I start my internship with a production house in New York City. My responsibilities at that job will include everything from brainstorming and writing to filming and editing. Now, I know I can do it all.

Superman II – A Parody

Introduction

(B-roll stock footage of the alien pod flying through space and landing on earth. Show Superman as a little boy.)

Voice Over: Many years ago, the last survivors of the planet Krypton sent a child, the son of Jarel, to Earth as their final hope.

(B-roll footage of Clark Kent sauntering down the hallway to the office.)

V.O.: Now, as an adult, people know him as mild-mannered reporter Clark Kent. But on weekends and Wednesday nights at karaoke, he is known as Superman.

(Bring up Superman II logo)

Scene 1: The Three Criminals are Condemned

(Three criminals stand in a green light and struggle to free themselves from their restraints. A big, green face appears.)

FACE: You three criminals are hereby sentenced to exile.

(CU shot of General Zod)

FACE: General Zod, you tried to lead a revolt and for that you must pay the full price. Not the discount price, the full price.

(CU shot of Ursa)

FACE: Ursa, you are guilty of wanting to bang Lord Zod. Gross.

(CU shot of Non)

FACE: And Non, you are just too damned stupid. As punishment, you will be held prisoner in this mirror and sent into space for life.

(Special kaleidoscope effect of three criminals stuck in mirror and floating across space.)

Scene 2: Clark and Lois get their Assignment

(Shot of Clark entering office.)

CLARK: Good morning all

(Clark slides over the desk, and falls on the floor.)

CHIEF: Kent! Get off the floor!

(Clark gets up.)

CHIEF: I'm sending you and Lois on an assignment to the Duck Pond. There are rumors that someone's been leaving fake penises around.

(CU Lois)

LOIS: Are you serious?

(CU Chief)

CHIEF: No, but there are rumors of a giant sperm whale.

(CU Lois)

LOIS: Are you serious?!

(CU Chief)

CHIEF: No, but he has been spotted, like a leopard.

(CU Lois)

LOIS: Are you serious?

(CU Chief)

CHIEF: Yes! And by the way, you two have to pose as a married couple and stay in a dorm room.

(CU Clark)

CLARK (stutters and stammers): Uh, gee, Chief, are you sure about that? I mean she, sh, she's a woman and I, I, I'm a man and...

(CU Chief)

CHIEF: Kent! Lane! Out!

Scene 3: Three Criminals Break Free of the Mirror

(Shot of the mirror falling to earth. Glass breaks. Shot of the mirror close up. We hear laughing from the evil villains. Shot of the villains walking up from over a hill triumphantly.)

ZOD: We're free.

(Ursa laughs. Non makes a noise.)

Scene 4: Clark and Lois at the Duck Pond

(Establishing shot of the pond. We see Steven playing near the pond as his mother reads a book. Cut to shot of Lois and Clark walking along the duck pond.)

LOIS: God, this assignment is so stupid. There's no way there's a speckled sperm whale in that pond.

(CU Clark)

CLARK (stutter and stammer): Well golly Lois, I don't know much about sp, sp, sperm whale –

(CU Lois)

LOIS (interrupting): You know Clark, all this talk about whales and sperm and speckles and sperm is making me hungry. (seductively)

(CU Clark)

CLARK (longingly): Yes...

(CU Lois)

LOIS: For a cheeseburger, with everything on it, except ketchup, mustard, lettuce, tomato, onion, mayo, pickles, bread, cheese, meat, pepperoni, and duck.

(CU Clark)

CLARK: Oh, ok, well, I can just fly over, oh gosh, not fly, that's ridiculous, uh, I can just walk over and get you tha –

(CU Lois)

LOIS (interrupting again): You know Clark, all this talk about whales and speckles and sperm is really making me thirsty –

(CU Steven)

STEVEN: Whales and speckles and sperm! Oh my!

(CU Lois)

LOIS: For some freshly squeezed...

(CU Clark)

CLARK (longingly again): Yes...

(CU Lois)

LOIS: Orange juice.

(CU Clark)

CLARK: Oh, ok. I'll be back.

(Clark exits the screen. Cut to shot of Steven.)

STEVEN: I'm gonna jump in mom.

(CU Mom)

MOM (not paying attention): That's nice dear.

(CU Steven)

STEVEN: You know I can't swim!

(CU Mom)

MOM: Good for you dear.

(CU Steven)

STEVEN: This is a cry for help mom! I don't want to live anymore!

(CU Mom)

MOM: Well have fun then dear.

(Steven walks over to the pond and starts to wade into it. Cut to shot of Lois.)

LOIS (sees Steven): Superman help!!

(Cut to shot of Steven drowning. Shot of Superman running in to save the day. **NOTE:** Superman is played by a different actor than Clark Kent! Superman holds out a stick for Steven to grab onto as he comes out of the water.)

SUPERMAN: Here boy. Superman helps boys who help themselves.

(Steven slips his grip on the stick.)

SUPERMAN: Oh no! Flimsy stick! That's nature's fault.

(Cut to shot of Lois Lane.)

LOIS: Hmm. Superman and Clark Kent are never in the same place at the same time. Conflicting schedules or not?

(Cut back to Steven)

STEVEN: Superman, that was fun! Let's do it again!

(CU Superman)

SUPERMAN: Well, shortcake, I'm a busy man, but if you want to go for another swim, suit yourself. (pushes Steven back into the water.)

(MS of Lois and Clark enters the screen again with food.)

CLARK: Here Lois, I got your food.

(Lois takes the burger wrapper, unwraps it. It's empty. She sniffs the wrapper.)

LOIS: Mmm. Thanks. It's just what I ordered. Oh Clark, you've got something on your glasses.

(Lois reaches for the glasses. Shot of Clark who hesitates and tells her no. Shot of Lois with a stunned face. Cut back and it's Superman using his fingers to make fake glasses in the hopes she won't know it's him.)

SUPERMAN: What? It's just me, Clark.

(Shot of Lois with a still shocked and confounded face.)

SUPERMAN: Uh, can I have my glasses back?

(CU Lois)

LOIS (puts the glasses back on his face): Uh, yeah, uh huh.

(CU Clark again [different actor])

(Cut back to Lois who pretends to wipe off her glasses in confusion.)

LOIS: Huh?!

(CU Clark)

CLARK (trying to quickly change the subject): Uh, Lois, aren't you going to drink your orange juice?

(CU Lois)

LOIS: Yes, I think I will Spiderman, no wait, Superman!

(CU Clark)

CLARK: Superman! That's crazy! Lois, what you just said was moronic. It was really dumb. It was dumb. You're dumb. I don't know how you make a living being so dumb –

(CU Lois)

LOIS (cuts him off): No. I've got you all figured out and I'm so sure you're Superman that I'm going to throw myself into that slimy, duck infested pond over there, and either you save me or you'll have one big story on your hands. (Lois runs off screen.)

(Cut to shot of Lois barely stepping into the pond.)

LOIS: Ew, it's cold. Oh, Superman, help!

(CU Clark)

CLARK: Lois, you're only standing in the water. Your shirt's not even wet.

(MS Lois in the water.)

LOIS: Oh, is that mud? No, no that's poop! Superman, help!

(CU Clark)

CLARK: Lois, you're a lifeguard anyway. And you have two, buoyant (pause) buoys.

(MS Lois)

LOIS: Oh, come on!

(CU Clark)

CLARK: Don't worry, Lois. I'll throw you a lifesaver. (CU of a package of Lifesavers Candy. He throws her one and she misses it.)

LOIS: Now I'm stuck here forever. Thanks.

(CU Clark)

CLARK: Buoys...hmmm...

(MS of Lois who gets out of the duck pond.)

LOIS: I can't believe I thought you were Superman!

Scene 5: The Three Criminals Wreak Havoc

(Establishing shot of the outside of a small-town store. Three men are standing and sitting around. The villains enter the scene. CU of Guy #1.)

GUY #1: Looks like the circus just got into town!

(General Zod comes over and grabs the man's arm, crushing it.)

ZOD: Puny human, where are we?

(CU Guy #1)

GUY #1(in pain): Muncie

(CU Zod)

ZOD: So this is planet Muncie. (Zod turns and picks up the guy and throws him against a wall. Shot of Guy #2 who gets up from his seat.)

GUY #2: Hey! You can't treat people like that!

(MS Zod and Ursa)

URSA: Can I laser him? Pleeese!

ZOD: Well, it is your birthday...

(Zoom in on Ursa who has lasers come out of her eyes. Cut to Guy #2 who is zapped in the crotch and rolls over in pain. Cut to Guy #3.)

GUY #3: Hey, now that's enough!

(CU of Non who tries to laser Guy #3, but only tiny lasers will come out of his eyes. The villains approach Guy #3 and grab his nipples.)

ZOD: Where can we find your leader?

GUY #3: The mayor? Well, he's downtown using the john.

(CU Zod)

ZOD: Then we will find this john mayor. ("The Real World" by John Mayer starts playing and the four characters hear the music. After a pause Guy #3 speaks.)

GUY #3: Not that John Mayer!

Scene 6: Clark and Lois in the Dorm Room

(MS of Lois and Clark. Lois puts on a robe.)

LOIS: Man, that duck pond was gross. Clark, could you hand me my guns?

CLARK: Oh sure Lois. Boy, you've got some dirty gun – Oh!

(Clark trips, falls and shoots himself with the gun.)

LOIS: Clark, are you ok?

CLARK: Oh, um, yeah. I guess I just shot myself in the face eight times.

LOIS: But you don't have a mark on you. How is that possible?

CLARK: Lois, there are two things I have to tell you.

(Clark leaves the screen. Cut to a shot of Superman [a different actor!] who turns around.)

SUPERMAN: Number one, that's a horrible wig.

(Cut to a shot of Lois messing with her hair.)

SUPERMAN: Number two, I'm Superman.

(CU Lois)

LOIS: Hmm, that's kinda gnarly.

(CU Superman)

SUPERMAN: Yes, it's very gnarly. Let's go back to my place.

Scene 7: Three Criminals Enter the Chief's Office

(Shot of the Chief doing work. The three bad guys bust into the room. Zod comes over and grabs the Chief.)

ZOD: Are you the mayor?

CHIEF: No, I'm the chief!

ZOD (throws down the Chief): Zod damn it. We've been looking for the mayor all damn day.

(MS Ursa and Non)

URSA: Won't he do?

(CU Zod)

ZOD: Well, I guess. Good enough.

(CU Chief)

CHIEF: I don't now who you guys think you are, but Superman will save me.

(MS Ursa and Non)

URSA: Who is this Superman?

(Non makes a noise. CU of Chief)

CHIEF: He's a super hero. Duh.

(CU Zod)

ZOD: Where can we find him?

(Cut to WS of the room and Lex Luthor enters through the door.)

LEX: Lex Luthor here. Did somebody say Superman? Because I happen to know his address.

(CU Chief)

CHIEF: How do you know where he lives?

(Zoom in on Lex.)

LEX: Well....

(FLASHBACK SCENE)

(B-roll of Lex skipping along. Cut to shot of Superman taking groceries into his house.)

V.O. BY LEX: I was skipping along one day, and I saw my arch nemesis, Superman, taking groceries into his secret hideout.

(END FLASHBACK SCENE)

(Shot of the three criminals and the Chief.)

EVERYONE: Ooooooh.

Scene 8: Superman Shows Lois His Secret Hideout, They become “Close”, and Superman Loses His Powers.

(Superman and Lois land outside in front of his “secret” hideout. The place is actually located on a busy street, and the house is very shabby. It’s dirty and has broken windows. MS Superman and Lois.)

LOIS: Wow, it was windy up there!

SUPERMAN: That’s flying for ya. Well, here’s my secret hideout.

(Cut to shots of the house. CU on broken windows.)

SUPERMAN: Let’s go inside.

LOIS: Eww.

(Superman and Lois enter the house.)

SUPERMAN: Here it is. Actually, I found this magic corndog (pulls out a corndog) and I threw it down at this plot of land, and this place just popped up.

(CU Lois)

LOIS (not interested in small talk): Yeah, yeah, uh huh. So where's the bedroom?

(CU Superman)

SUPERMAN: The bedroom? Well, it's right this way.

(Cut to shot of Lois and Superman in bed together.)

LOIS: Gee, I can't believe you gave up all of your super powers just for me!

SUPERMAN: Woo, yeah, big mistake. Let's watch some TV.

LOIS: Huh?

(Shot of the TV. General Zod is broadcasting a message to Superman.)

ZOD: I am General Zod. I have taken over planet Muncie, and now I challenge you, Superman, to come kneel before Zod!

(Cut to CU Lois)

LOIS: Oh no! Now you have to save planet Muncie!

(CU Superman)

SUPERMAN (mildly disgusted): I don't know how I'm going to do that. I gave up all my powers for, well, for this.

(CU reaction shot from Lois.)

SUPERMAN: Wait! I know! I mean, I already had lunch and I'm not really hungry, but maybe I could eat another magic corn dog! What say you?

(CU Lois)

LOIS: Uh, yeah, except I think I just ate the last one.

Scene 9: The Three Criminals Meet Superman

(Back in the Chief's office, the three criminals, the chief, and Lex are looking really bored. Cut to shot of Lois busting into the room in a hurry.)

LOIS: Chief! Chief! Oh my god! Zod!

(MS Ursa and Non. Ursa crosses over towards Lois.)

URSA: Isn't this the sweet, sweet tapioca that Superman likes best?

(Ursa walks into the shot with Lois and starts to give her noogies.)

URSA: She could be valuable to us.

LOIS: Oh no, noogies! You'll never get away with this. Superman will be here any second to save us.

(Cut to funny shot of the other two bad guys, Lex, and the Chief just doing something weird. Then cut back to Lois and Ursa.)

LOIS: He'll be here really soon.

(Cut to another funny shot of the guys and back to Lois and Ursa.)

LOIS: I swear. He'll be here any second.

(Cut to one more funny shot of the guys doing "YMCA". Then cut to shot of Superman entering the room.)

SUPERMAN: Hey! This ends now!

(Superman takes off running and everyone except the Chief follows him out the door.)

Scene 10: The Climax in Superman's Kitchen.

(Superman, et. al. rush into Superman's house and into the kitchen. Superman turns around and stops them all dead in their tracks.)

SUPERMAN: STOP! Can I speak to Lex for a moment?

(Superman motions for Lex to come closer. Lex and Superman talk privately.)

SUPERMAN (to Lex): Whatever you do, don't let them eat these (mumbles) magic corndogs.

LEX: The what?

SUPERMAN: The (mumbles again) magic corndogs.

LEX: Excuse me?

SUPERMAN: Magic Corndogs.

(CU of the corndogs)

LEX (laughs mockingly at Superman): You need magic corndogs?!

(CU Superman)

SUPERMAN: Shhh! Don't let them eat these because it will give them extra special super duper powers.

(Lex turns around quickly to talk to the three bad guys.)

LEX: Ooh! Hey guys, if you want super duper whatever powers, eat these magic corndogs. Superman said so!

(Cut to WS of the villains.)

ZOD: Hand those to me.

(The villains eat the corndogs and start to feel sick. They make noises to indicate something is very wrong. Cut to CU Superman.)

SUPERMAN: Ha! I fooled you. Those were anti-magic corndogs. Now you guys are powerless! (pause) "Anti" means opposite.

(Cut to WS of Lois looking at the three villains, especially Ursa.)

LOIS: Powerless, huh?

(Lois whips out one of her guns, pistol whips Ursa across the face and then shoots her. She shoots Non and Zod. Then a random guy comes out of a bedroom.)

RANDOM GUY: Hey, what're you guys doing in my house?

(Lois shoots random guy.)

RANDOM GUY: What the hell?

(Lois shoots Lex. Finally, Lois shoots Superman.)

SUPERMAN: Hey! Ouch! Stop it!

(CU Lois)

LOIS: Ooops, sorry! (shrugs)

Scene 11: Conclusion: Lois's Memory is Erased

(Lois works at her desk in the office but is clearly distracted. Superman enters the office.)

SUPERMAN: Hello Lois. How are you doing today?

(CU Lois)

LOIS: Are you kidding? Now that I know who you are, I can't see you, I can't touch you, I can't smell you, and I can't eat your magic corndogs anymore!

(CU Superman)

SUPERMAN: Enough with the corndogs already!

(MS Superman and Lois)

SUPERMAN: But honestly, I don't really know what to say.

LOIS: Just say you still have the hots for me.

(Superman leans in for an awkward kiss. When they kiss, Lois gets faint and falls into her chair. CU Lois. Then Clark Kent [different actor] enters the picture.)

CLARK: Are you ok?

LOIS: Yeah, yes. What were we talking about? It seems like something integral to the plot, but...

CLARK: That doesn't sound like anything around here. Actually, we were just talking about Superman again.

(CU Lois)

LOIS: Oh yeah. You know, you shouldn't feel so threatened by him. You have a lot going for yourself.

(MS Lois and Clark)

CLARK: Really?!

LOIS: Uh huh. Now, could you be super for me and get me some...

CLARK: Freshly squeezed orange juice. Uh huh.

(Clark leaves the scene. The camera zooms in on Lois.)

LOIS: He's just such a super man!
(Fade to black. Bring up Superman II logo.)

THE END

Bibliography

Superman II

Directed by
Richard Lester

Written by
Jerry Siegel, Joe Shuster, Mario Puzo, David Newman, Leslie Newman, and Tom Mankiewicz

Produced by
Ilya Salkind... executive producer
Pierre Spengler... producer

Distributed by
Warner Bros.